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ABSTRACT

Interviews with high school seniors in Bolivia (n=1,100) and Chile (n=2,460) demonstrated that individuals with international contacts hold more positive attitudes toward others than those individuals without this type of exposure. The study examined the students' opinions about other countries of the Latin American region, opportunities for contacts available to respondents in the region, and the impact of those contacts on opinions toward other Latin Americans and on views toward Latin American integration. Chile and Bolivia offer a unique opportunity to study these questions since both countries have a long tradition of diplomatic tensions and boundary conflict. Results include the following: Respondents in both countries showed a mutual dislike. Only 31% of the Bolivians and 18% of the Chileans indicated having friends in neighboring countries. One-fourth of the Chileans had informal contacts in nations other than their immediate neighbors. Even in the case of countries with historical animosities, students who had had social relations beyond local and national boundaries were more accepting of citizens from the other countries. Finally, students with international contacts appeared more favorably disposed toward regional integration. (RM)

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THE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL CONTACTS ON INTERNATIONAL ATTITUDES OF YOUTH (The Case of Bolivia and Chile)*

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(Copywrite 1983 by Darío Menanteau-Horta)

Introduction

In recent years there has been heightened awareness of the need for a more comprehensive international perspective in education.

Challenges and opportunities in contemporary society are increasingly seen as basic parts of a growing and irreversible process of interdependence among nations. The risks involved in a geographically narrow and culturally incomplete learning experience are cited by Wright (1972):

> ". . . a parochially limited education would be a heinous fraud for the student's view of the world would be so distorted, so truncated, as to leave him incapable of facing a world larger and more complex than he could know and from which he could not escape simply because he wore intellectual blinders."

Arguing for the enduring values and practical advantages of a global perspective in education, a recent report on undergraduate education indicates that,

> "the study of other parts of the world rests on many grounds: on practical terms of economic interest or military strategy; on intellectual arguments that seek to expand the aesthetic universe or the range of the social scientist's analysis; or along the more subjective line that one knows one's self by knowing others." (U. of Minnesota, 1980)

Cross-cultural contacts and direct learning experiences in international settings are usually singled out as powerful components of global education. Advocates of this approach claim that exposure to another culture may constitute an effective vehicle to expand knowledge and understanding. Educational programs that transcend the traditional barriers of a nation-state may be the initial steps in shaping the concept of an international community (Hayden, 1982).

Despite such glowing optimism about international education and exchange activities between countries, the question is open whether these programs live up to their expectations. This report deals with the hypothesis that participation in international activities, has a salutary effect on an individual's

perception and acceptance of other nationalities. Theoretically, one would, expect that an internationally expanded network of relationships would generate a more favorable outlook toward social, political and economic integration with the international community. The question for analysis is whether this hypothesized outcome will occur to a greater or lesser extent depending upon the historical conflict condition in which two or more nations have taken part. If there are long-standing animosities between countries, would it be possible to conceive that increased contacts might actually reinforce those animosities? The structuring of these contacts, therefore, becomes of crucial importance as to the direction of opinions and attitudes of individuals.

The setting for this study is Latin America. The emphasis is on conditions and mechanisms affecting international awareness and attitudes of youth in Bolivia and Chile toward regional integration and citizens from other countries. Data are from two national random samples of high school seniors in Bolivia (N=1,100) and Chile (N=2,460), interviewed as part of a larger research project on comparative sociology of youth.

The report focuses on:

1. opinions expressed by Bolivian and Chilean students about other countries of the Latin American region;
2. opportunities for contacts available to respondents in the region;
3. the impact of those contacts on opinions toward other Latin Americans and on views toward Latin American integration.

Chile and Bolivia offer a unique opportunity to study these questions since both countries have a long tradition of diplomatic tensions and boundary conflict. The 1879 war between Chile and the combined forces of Peru and Bolivia left a historical strain on the relationships between these countries.

Latin American Integration

Some of the first attempts at regional unity among Latin American countries began in the early 19th century under the leadership of Simon Bolivar. In 1810 the movement for political independence crystalized in Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela, and Bolivar saw integration of the region as a mechanism to consolidate the independence of the new countries from Spain. In 1814, as president of Venezuela and later in special treaties signed with Peru in 1822 and with Mexico in 1823, Bolivar created the basis for the first meeting of Latin American republics held in Panama in 1826.

Bolivar's ideas, however, required commitment and perseverance which, as revealed in the following years, very few Latin American countries were able to provide as they experienced internal political crises and boundary conflicts with their neighbors. Thus, Argentina and Brazil engaged in a long dispute over the territory occupied today by Uruguay. El Salvador fought against Guatemala, Peru and Bolivia against Chile, and Bolivia against Paraguay. These conflicts contributed heavily to the separation of the countries throughout the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. Nevertheless, the concept of integration remained alive in the writings of Latin American intellectuals and educators such as Andres Bello, Juan Montalvo, Jose Marti and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (Menanteau, 1973).

It was not until the 1950's that new initiatives were forcefully advanced by political leaders to organize regional structures. After a number of successful negotiations, the Latin American republics agreed to create both the Inter-American Bank for Development and the Central American Common Market in 1959. A year later, ten South American countries and Mexico formed the Latin American Free Trade Association.

During the 1960's additional progress was made. The Montevideo Treaty of 1964 gave origin to the Andean Pact which brought together Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. In April, 1967, at the Conference of Punta del Este, Uruguay, the Declaration of the Presidents of the Americas was signed, establishing guidelines for the creation of a Latin American Common Market as a mechanism to achieve consolidation of a regional economic system of Latin America before 1985.

Recent history, however, reveals that many of the goals and organizational blueprints designed by governments to attain integration of Latin America are still unfulfilled. During the last two decades a number of political and diplomatic incidents, followed occasionally by military threats, have tarnished international understanding and severed the integration movement. Some examples in Central America are the conflict between El Salvador and Honduras in the 1960's and the disputes between Nicaragua and Costa Rica in the 1970's. In South America, Chile abandoned the Andean Pact in the mid-1970's, and boundary problems still continue between Colombia and Venezuela, Peru and Brazil, Ecuador and Peru, Brazil and Argentina, Argentina and Chile, and Chile and Bolivia.

A new awakening of nationalism coincides with the advent of military regimes in most of the Latin American nations during the last few years. There is an increasing investment in arms while more limitations are being placed on the free movement of people from one country to another, and greater difficulties in trade are being created. The central idea of integration, therefore, as a fundamental road for economic and social development of Latin America has been not only diminished but virtually replaced by a new philosophy of national security.

Given the present panorama of economic and political constraints on inter-country relationships in Latin America, questions may be raised concerning the need for new approaches in education and about the effects of opportunities enhancing direct contacts, especially among young people of the region.

Conceptual Perspectives

The study of international contacts has long captured the attention of social scientists interested in organizational, political and economic structures beyond the traditional concept of the nation-state (Haas, 1958; Ake, 1967; Schmitter, 1970).

Social integration, regardless of the size and number of units involved, refers to human relationships of a rather stable nature oriented to achieve a higher level of adaptation and equilibrium within the social system (Bredemeier and Stephenson, 1962). For other sociologists (Parsons, 1951; Landecker, 1950, 1951; and Parsons and Shils, 1962) social integration is the process by which different components become unified into one single system. Li (1971) suggests, however, that although contacts are important for integration, the notion of equilibrium endorsed by some investigators becomes impractical within the context of social and political conflict in Latin America.

Lagos (1970) contends that regional integration among Latin American countries could be better understood from a perspective of social change which includes the elements of conflict and crisis in social and international relations. Accordingly, the process of integration would occur through a dialogue and contacts among a diversity of actors who enter into a dialectic flow of contradiction and crisis. Integration is achieved through higher levels of participation and interaction following tensions and conflicts.

This analysis combines a socio-psychological perspective with a structural approach. The socio-psychological dimension refers to the state of psychological readiness based on the convergence of opinions and attitudes held by individuals regarding the process of international integration. This notion of psychological preparedness has been pointed out by Levi (1950) in studying those factors that enhance or limited the post-war attempt of European unity. According to him, the establishment of supernational organizations must be preceded by a generalized conviction regarding the existence of common needs and expectations of possible solutions shared by a sufficiently large number of the population involved.

From a structural perspective, integration may be viewed as the development of a new international community. Van Wagenen (1952) defines the concept of community in terms of a shared feeling among individuals who live in a territory and are able to achieve some consensus through interaction and cooperative participation. Dentler (1968) affirms that a modern community is a linkage that brings together a social, psychological and territorial reality where society, culture and individuals converge. McIver (1973) agrees, indicating that the limits of a community are psychological limits, and its expansion in a world with physical means of communication is an expansion of attitudes.

RESULTS

Attitudes and opinions held by individuals regarding other countries are usually conceived as elements of a cognitive and an emotional structure. This psychological reality may either help or hinder the development of international awareness and acceptance of other nationalities, depending upon the presence and direction of the following categories:

1. ethnocentric beliefs, which in some cases may take the form of a strong nationalistic attitude;
2. unreal conception about other countries and/or their inhabitants that tend to be expressed in terms of national stereotypes;
3. negative attitudes toward foreigners which create barriers as a mechanism to protect localistic views and values.

For this study, two attitudinal dimensions were explored: first, the pattern of expressed preferences regarding other countries in the region; and secondly, the levels of acceptance of citizens from other nations. While the first dimension aims to assess general likes and dislikes toward a larger territorial and social unit, the second examines the social distance that exists between individuals of different nationalities.

Preferences Toward Other Countries

Bolivian and Chilean students were asked to indicate their preferences toward other Latin American nations by designating their "most liked" and "most disliked" country in the region.

Respondents in both countries showed a mutual dislike, as about half of the respondents (45% Bolivians and 54% Chileans) singled out each other as their "most disliked" nation in Latin America. Also, among Chileans a relatively high percentage (23%) identified Argentina as "most disliked" followed by 6% naming Peru. It is important to remember that these three countries (Argentina, Bolivia and Peru) have had boundary problems and diplomatic litigations with Chile in the past.

(Table 1 about here)

While the "most liked" country for Bolivian respondents was Argentina (42%) with Brazil ranking second, (29%), the reverse was true for Chilean students. Over 40% of the respondents in Chile named Brazil, followed by 18%

choosing Argentina, 13% Mexico and 6% each for Venezuela and Cuba. Among Bolivians, Peru and Chile shared third place in the preferences of the respondents, at 6% each.

Reciprocal Rejection

A modified version of the social distance scale (Bogardus' Scale) was utilized to assess students' acceptance of individuals from other countries. This scale included six ordered categories of acceptance and rejection: (1) "as a member of my family," (2) "as my best friend," (3) "to live and work together," (4) "as a citizen in my country," (5) "only as a tourist or visitor" and (6) "undesirable in my country".

For purposes of table 2, the first four categories are combined and defined as "acceptance," while the last two are combined and treated as "rejection."

Table 2 shows a clear pattern of reciprocal rejection among the Bolivian and Chilean respondents. About half of the Bolivian students (48%) gave a rejection response, while about one in five (19%) gave an acceptance response. Chileans seem to reciprocate in a nearly identical way; 57 percent would reject Bolivians while 18 percent would accept them according to the manner reported here.

(Table 2 about here)

Bolivian students tended to accept other Latin Americans such as Argentinians (51%), Brazilians (40%), Peruvians (40%), and Mexicans (38%) more readily than individuals from other parts of the world. Conversely, Chilean students expressed a wider social distance from their Latin American neighbors and closer emotional proximity with, and acceptance of, Europeans and Orientals. Over half of the Chileans accepted Brazilians (60%), Mexicans (50%) and

Uruguayans (40%); these same respondents, however, showed even greater acceptance for French (62%), Spaniards (60%) and Germans (55%). Chilean students expressed a higher degree of acceptance toward the Japanese than toward some of their Latin neighbors. Paraguayans, Peruvians and Argentinians were accepted by only one-third of the Chilean respondents. Again, in both societies the weight of history and tradition, cultural influences from abroad and past conflicts among neighboring countries appeared to play a significant role in the way young individuals perceived, understood and accepted others.

Inter-regional Contacts of Students

Communication between governments and direct contacts among members of different societies have been traditionally recognized as important vehicles to achieve better international understanding and cooperation. In Latin America, however, natural and geographical barriers, combined with political tensions and limited development of transportation and communication networks, have greatly interfered with possibilities of direct contact among citizens. When students were asked if they had visited other countries in the region, about three-fourths of Chileans and 70% of Bolivians indicated that they had never traveled abroad. Among Bolivians, 20% had visited only one country, while 10% had traveled to two or more countries in Latin America. The majority of these visits were to neighboring countries. In the case of the Chilean students, a similar pattern was observed.

(Table 3 about here)

A higher proportion of Bolivians (31%) than Chileans (18%) indicated having friends in neighboring countries. However, one-fourth of the Chileans appeared to have expanded their network of informal contacts and associations in nations other than their immediate neighbors of Argentina, Bolivia and Peru.

Students' Contacts and Acceptance of Others

Table 4 summarizes the results concerning the acceptance of other Latin Americans by Bolivian and Chilean respondents in relation to direct contacts with individuals in some of those countries.

The general pattern of response by students in both nations confirms the hypothesis proposed in this study that social relations beyond local and national boundaries are associated with greater acceptance of other nationalities. The findings of this research show that young individuals with international contacts are more willing to accept other nationals than students without this type of association.

(Table 4 about here)

Even in the case of countries with historical animosities (i.e., Bolivia and Chile), the proportion of students accepting citizens from the other country is significantly higher among the group of young individuals with international acquaintances than among those without them.

Attitudes Toward Latin American Integration

The notion of regional integration still remains blurred by nationalistic sentiments and largely ignored by vast segments of the population in Latin America.

Most students interviewed in Bolivia and Chile were aware of some of the historical facts and issues related to political unity in the past and economic integration in recent years. Yet, less than 10% of the respondents in each country identified the current lack of Latin American integration as a serious problem. Moreover, while many may consider integration beneficial for their own countries, they see it more as a means to increase trade and commerce with their neighbors than in terms of the necessary expansion of their loyalties

and interests to a larger regional community. In fact, a relatively high proportion of indiviuals from both samples held rather negative feelings toward integration. (See Table 5)

To determine respondents' attitudes about some problems of regionalization and to assess the influence of international contacts in shaping and modifying these attitudes, students were asked their opinions regarding five statements carrying negative connotations to the idea of Latin American integration. Answers to each item ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" with two intermediate categories of moderate responses for agreement and disagreement with the statement.

(Table 5 about here)

Data reported in Table 5 shows the following findings:

First, a higher proportion of Bolivian students than Chilean agreed with the selected items opposed to integration. Differences between responses from the two samples were larger when the statement refers to integration as a "threat to a patriot" (item 3) and a "hazard to national development" (item 4). In general, Chileans appeared more inclined than Bolivians to express favorable attitudes toward integration.

Second, the first two items which represent deeper nationalistic orientations received the higher percentages of agreement from respondents in both countries. Approximately half of the respondents from Bolivia (50%) and Chile (45%) accepted the statement that "some Latin American countries are undesirable. . ."

Finally, students who have had an opportunity to develop an informal network of contacts and friends in other countries appeared more favorably disposed toward regional integration. Among Bolivian and Chilean respondents, those without contacts showed higher percentages in agreement with statements

negative to integration than students with contacts. Differences between these two groups were significant for three of the five items in Bolivia and for all items in the case of Chile.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings of this research point out some of the difficulties facing the development of unifying ties among individuals from two Latin American countries. They demonstrate that in addition to political agreements, diplomatic encounters and new economic structures for increased trade, it is also important to broaden international awareness of the population and expand their traditional conceptions of national communities. Without this socio-psychological dimension that replaces old loyalties for new ones, that develops new interests and increases understanding and acceptance of others, the emergence of a congenial social environment for Latin American integration will continue to be an unreachable goal.

This research, however, also suggests that education, particularly learning which includes an international perspective and facilitates direct contacts among individuals from different countries, may provide a valuable contribution in shaping positive attitudes toward a new Latin American community. If this assertion proves to be valid for Latin America, it could also be postulated as an effective vehicle to enhance better understanding and cooperation in the rest of the world.

A final point refers to the role that a number of educational experiences outside formal schooling may play in developing an international perspective of young individuals. Among them, sport activities, cultural exchanges and other forms of youth participation have been singled out as successful educational channels for this purpose.

Regarding the role of sports in international relations, Wagner (1982) indicates that sports may be functional for the development of both national cohesion and international goodwill. He concludes that "through sports can come a beginning of understanding among widely diverse peoples." Similar viewpoints are also expressed by Chu (1976) when he discusses the scope of international exchanges among sport participants and the implications of these programs for international relations.

In Latin America the importance of sports and other extracurricular activities throughout the entire educational process still needs to be recognized and expanded (Menanteau, 1982). Among the student populations studied in Bolivia and Chile, over 50% of the respondents did not participate in any youth organization or extracurricular activity. However, for those who were active participants, sports constituted the principal and most challenging activitiy. In fact, over one-third of the participants in youth programs in Chile and over one-half in Bolivia were actively involved in sports. This situation points out the possibility to utilize sports and other youth programs as vehicles of learning and direct contact with individuals from other countries.

As demonstrated in this report, individuals with international contacts hold more positive attitudes toward others than those individuals without this type of exposure. Today, therefore, it would be reasonable and desirable for integration purposes to extend this social network of direct exchanges to a larger number of the Latin American younger generation.

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Table 1. Preferences of Bolivian and Chilean Students Regarding Latin American Countries

	"Most liked country" by:		"Most disliked country" by:	
	Bolivians %	Chileans %	Bolivians %	Chileans %
Bolivia	--	1	--	54
Chile	6	--	45	--
Argentina	42	18	8	23
Brazil	29	42	6	2
Cuba	2	6	4	4
Mexico	4	13	1	--
Peru	6	3	7	6
Uruguay	2	4	2	1
Venezuela	3	6	--	1
Other L.A. country*	3	4	14	5
Undecided	3	3	13	4
	100	100	100	100
Total (N)	(912)	(1,917)	(674)	(1,684)

*Includes Colombia, Costa Rica, Eduador, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Paraguay.

Table 2. Patterns of Acceptance and Rejection Expressed by Bolivian and Chilean Students Regarding other Nationals

	Bolivian (N=1,110)		Chilean (N=2,460)	
	Accept*	Reject**	Accept*	Reject**
	%	%	%	%
Latin Americans				
Argentinians	51	23	34	44
Brazilians	40	22	60	15
Bolivians	--	--	18	57
Chileans	19	48	--	--
Colombians	30	21	36	27
Ecuadorians	25	24	36	28
Mexicans	38	20	50	19
Paraguayans	24	28	32	29
Peruvians	40	17	33	32
Uruguayans	29	21	40	23
Venezuelans	31	21	37	25
Europeans				
Germans	35	25	55	21
Spaniards	34	24	60	17
French	29	27	62	16
Orientals				
Japanese	29	26	40	30

* "accept" means respondents chose one of the following categories: "as a member of my family," "as my best friend," "to live and work together," "as a citizen in my country."

** "reject" means respondents chose "only as a tourist or visitor" or "undesirable in my country."

Table 3. Visits and Network of Contacts of Bolivian and Chilean Students in Other Latin American Countries

	Bolivians (N=1,110) %	Chileans (N=2,460) %
Travel in Latin America		
a) Visit to one country only	20	14
b) Visit to two or more countries	10	11
Type of Country Visited		
a) Neighboring country*	24	15
b) Other country in L.A.	3	5
Contacts and Friends in L.A. Countries		
a) Neighboring country*	31	19
b) In other countries of region	13	25

* For Bolivia it includes Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru. For Chile it refers to Argentina, Bolivia and Peru.

Table 4. Acceptance of Other Latin Americans by Bolivian and Chilean Students With and Without Contacts in Region

	Percent indicating acceptance:			
	Bolivians		Chileans	
	With Contacts (N=488)	Without Contacts (N=622)	With Contacts (N=1075)	Without Contacts (N=1252)
	Percent		Percent	
Bolivians	--	--	22	16*
Chileans	24	15*	--	--
Argentinians	55	48*	41	29*
Brazilians	44	37	65	56*
Colombians	33	29*	40	33*
Ecuadorians	28	22	41	33*
Paraguayans	28	20*	36	29*
Peruvians	42	40	38	29*
Uruguayans	32	27	47	35*
Venezuelans	34	29*	41	34*

*Differences significant at $p < .05$ or less for Chi square values.

Table 5. Attitudes Toward Latin American Integration Among Bolivian and Chilean Students With and Without Contacts in Other Countries.

Items Contrary to L.A. Integration	Percent in Agreement with Item: Bolivians With Contacts	Bolivians Without Contacts	Chileans With Contacts	Chileans Without Contacts
	Percent		Percent	
"Some Latin American countries are undesirable to deal with"	45	54*	38	51*
"(My country) is the first and best nation in Latin America"	42	50*	22	35*
"Integration is a threat to a real patriot"	26	34*	13	21*
"Integration is a hazard to each country's development"	35	38	15	21*
"Integration of L.A. is an impossible dream"	37	37	26	33*
(N)	(318)	(702)	(598)	(1645)

*Differences significant at $p < .05$ level for Chi square values.